

## [Our Beloved Stranger](#) by [Luddleston](#)

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**Summary:**

*"I missed you with the whole of my heart," Achilles said, taking Pat's face in his hand, tracing his cheekbone with his thumb. "I spent so long so deep in sorrow. That's why I didn't."*

*"That's why I did."*

Achilles learns that Patroclus has a much more intimate relationship with Zagreus than he'd imagined. Patroclus learns that Achilles has spent all his time in the House of Hades *not making a move*. This obviously must be remedied, but not before Patroclus gives up every detail.

## Our Beloved Stranger

### Author's Note:

For a kinkmeme prompt: "Just thinking about Achilles turning down Zagreus' advances out of propriety only to find out, after reuniting with Patroclus, that Pat had no such reservations about immediately sleeping with him."

Because uh, yes. Absolutely.

May now need to write a very emotional pat/zag first time, we shall see.

"So, that apprentice of yours," Patroclus said, out of absolutely nowhere, as he combed his fingers through Achilles' hair, gently unwinding any tangles he came across.

"Zagreus?" Achilles asked, like he'd ever had another. To be fair, Patroclus had a way with his hands which was quite distracting and tended to make everything Achilles said a few degrees less intelligent.

Patroclus laughed, brushing Achilles' hair aside and leaning in to kiss his neck. "Of course."

"What about him? I wouldn't think this is the ideal moment for discussing... that."

"And why not?"

Achilles gestured at their general situation: naked, in their bed, Patroclus' free hand steadily creeping down his side. They'd gone at it once already, but as it turned out, sexual capacity was less about physicality and more about desire, in the Underworld. And they had plenty of that.

"So?"

"I hardly think—when we're about to—" Incredible, how a seemingly endless span of chastity turned him into a spluttering matron, unable to say anything that may be mildly construed as sexual aloud. He was getting better at it, when Patroclus wasn't bringing up Zagreus while tracing the shape of Achilles' hipbone.

Patroclus' brow furrowed in confusion and then smoothed as he appeared to come to a realization. "Ah," he said. He spoke with such mildness, Achilles didn't expect the next words out of his mouth to be, "you've never had him, have you?"

Achilles allowed Patroclus to draw him closer but wouldn't quite look in his eyes. He knew he was going red—and even if he weren't, Patroclus would read the embarrassment in his eyes. "Of course not! He... I... no, Pat. I haven't. Why would I?"

Patroclus actually had the gall to laugh, and now Achilles did look at him, glaring. His irritation was tempered by the way Patroclus smiled at him, though. "Because you have eyes, my heart. Or has life in Tartarus so decimated your sense of taste?"

Patroclus was correct in one way. In life, Achilles most certainly would not have tried to ignore the affections of a youth so beautiful as Zagreus, especially when such affections were so freely given. "I missed you with the whole of my heart," Achilles said, taking Pat's face in his hand, tracing his cheekbone with his thumb. "I spent so long so deep in sorrow. That's why I didn't."

"That's why I *did*."

The admission spread through Achilles slow, and then all at once, a rush of heat that made his immortal form forget to simulate breathing. It wasn't jealousy, nor was it anger, but the force of his imagination picturing in vivid detail the image of Zagreus in his lover's arms. Patroclus was broader than Zagreus, though he was only a mortal shade while the lad was a god, broad enough that he could cover Zagreus in entirety with his body. Zagreus would have gone to him wearing the same hopeful, lopsided smile he donned whenever he gave Achilles yet another lavish gift. Guileless, eager

—if his affections for Patroclus were anything like those he harbored for Achilles, he'd be thrilled and willing besides.

How many times had Zagreus approached Achilles at his post, having come from Patroclus' embrace?

Achilles felt he should have noticed, but of course, it wasn't as if the lad was coming out of the Styx marked with his lover's fingerprints. Although... Achilles had seen him with a lurid red and purple mark on his throat before (that, of course, had come from either Megara or Thanatos, and he could guess at which given what he knew of their proclivities). Zagreus bruised in a way that was strangely beautiful, as though his godhood displayed itself on his very skin. If his body didn't emerge from the river unmarred in entirety, perhaps Achilles would have seen a similar mark Patroclus had left on him.

"Achilles?" Patroclus sounded concerned; reasonable, given that Achilles had just been silent for a span of time.

"Pat, I..."

"I didn't mean to do such a thing to hurt you," Patroclus said, tentative as though he knew his own words were wrong entirely.

"You haven't. I may find myself a bit envious, though."

"Oh?"

Achilles shifted, pressing himself the slightest bit closer to Patroclus. "Yes. I need you to tell me everything. In lurid detail."

Patroclus' laugh sounded more like a snort. "You know I'm no good at 'lurid detail.' I'd sound ridiculous if I tried taking a page out of Theseus' book."

"You're quite eloquent when you want to be," Achilles said. The burning within him hadn't subsided, instead having morphed into a pressing need to hear *exactly* what Patroclus had done with their dear prince.

"I think it would be more effective if I showed you how it was," Patroclus suggested, sitting up but holding onto Achilles' shoulder to keep him from coming with. His opposite hand tipped Achilles' chin up, so that Achilles was looking at him from below.

Oh, yes.

"Show me," Achilles agreed. "How did this all even start?"

"He sits with me, sometimes, on the bank where I was before you joined me, here," Patroclus explained. "We talk—he flirts uncontrollably. I might do so at times, too." He smiled, teeth white against the dark of his beard. "I didn't know I still could, before him."

"Glad you worked that one out," Achilles said. He lay with his head next to Patroclus' hip, one arm curled around Pat's thigh.

Patroclus continued to run his fingers through Achilles' hair, his head tipped back and his eyes closed as he recalled. "It was that day he brought one of his rewards from a previous chamber with him. A pomegranate. To this day, I've no idea whether he was trying to seduce me or not, but watching his tongue lick at his fingers over and over... it was impossible not to kiss him."

Achilles thought perhaps he would fall into the same trap, if it truly had been a trap Zagreus had laid.

"Like so." Patroclus demonstrated by leaning over, tipping up Achilles' chin again—Achilles had to shift away from him by a few handspans in order to accept the kiss. He assumed Zagreus hadn't been lying pressed against Patroclus' side, anyhow. The kiss only lasted moments, before Patroclus pulled away, but he didn't go far, still looking at Achilles from mere inches away. "I thought I'd gone too far, that he'd run." He was quiet, and he couldn't stop smiling. "But he pulled me back in before I could apologize."

Achilles pulled him in, now, eagerly playing this part. He wouldn't kiss like Zagreus, didn't know *how* Zagreus kissed, but he knew how Patroclus liked it. He put an arm around Achilles' shoulders, pulling Achilles into his lap,

holding him gentler than usual. This was how he held a man he'd never been with before, and for a moment, Achilles drew away, not certain how he should continue.

"He stopped to ask me if this was *okay*, and I almost couldn't bear it," Patroclus said. "He's devastatingly earnest. He reminds me of you, when you were younger—this was all I could do." He kissed Achilles again, deeper this time, a sweep of his tongue opening Achilles' mouth for him. Achilles couldn't help but clutch at his shoulders, enjoying Patroclus with the same fervor he always did.

Patroclus allowed himself to tumble back, Achilles atop him, knees on either side of one of Pat's thighs. "I assume you had more clothing to remove," Achilles said, because he was fairly certain Zagreus and Patroclus weren't in the habit of spending time together in the nude.

"Naturally, yes. It didn't all end up removed, though. Not that first time."

"So there *has* been more than one?"

"Oh, yes." Patroclus' palm traced down Achilles' neck to his chest. "The first time, things went a bit too quickly," he said, pulling Achilles in closer, so that the two of them were pressed together. Achilles was already quite aroused by the image of the prince astride Patroclus' thigh like this, but was a little surprised to feel Patroclus hard against him, as well. "Without you, I hardly saw a need for that sort of pleasure. Once ignited, such a need was hard to douse. It bore repeating."

"Oh, I'm certain it did," Achilles teased, hitching his hips against Patroclus'.

"Like that, yes."

Achilles wasn't certain whether Patroclus was simply pleased, or if he meant this was how Zagreus had done things. "So, it was just the two of you like this? The first time, that is?"

"Mm. With a lot less talking and a lot more of his tongue in my mouth. He's good with it, you know."

"His tongue?"

"Yes."

Achilles' only experience with Zagreus' tongue was with his sharp wit, but he was finding every moment he wanted more and more to be acquainted with Zagreus' mouth in a different sort of way. "Did he suck your cock?" He was curious how long Zagreus had lasted, Patroclus was thick enough to make your jaw sore, if you weren't well-practiced. Achilles was.

"He has," Patroclus said, "his mouth is the warmest thing you've ever felt."

Achilles shivered, despite Elysium always remaining the same, mild temperature. "What else?" He didn't have it in him to be self-conscious about the way he was rocking his hips against Patroclus' with the neediness of a man deprived of such pleasures far too long, despite having had him an hour ago.

"You know... you know what he's like," Patroclus said, his voice becoming a little less even as he returned Achilles' affections, grinding up against him. "He's eager to please and incandescent when he's praised. He takes cock like he's a descendant of Aphrodite, not of Hades."

Achilles groaned, burying his face in Patroclus' shoulder.

"He feels the same about you, you know. You should see the way he talks about you. The way he goes all red when he tries to slyly beg details of our relationship out of me."

"Pat, please." He couldn't. "Don't allow my hopes to rise so."

Patroclus' hand reached between them, taking his own cock and Achilles' together, stroking them both. He had not said whether this was something he'd done with Zagreus, but Achilles imagined it nonetheless. "He'd be on his knees for you in an instant if only you asked."

*"Patroclus, no more—"*

"He wants you, my love. Wants you to take him." Patroclus' hand picked up speed as he spoke. "Wants you to bend him over and bury yourself inside him until he screams."

Achilles, himself, was on the verge of screaming.

"His voice is lovely, I'm sure you've noticed. Especially when in the throes of passion." *How* was Pat's voice still so even? He barely stopped for breath, even though he was quite obviously just as aroused by this as Achilles. "Have you ever imagined it? The way he'd sound? He isn't quiet, you know."

"*Gods*, Pat!"

"Well? Have you?" Patroclus was grinning like he already knew the answer to his question.

When Achilles continued to not answer him, Patroclus' hand stopped moving over him, and he gave Achilles a curious look instead, arching one eyebrow. He wouldn't get Achilles off until he had an answer, then. Achilles found himself at a precipice: he'd admitted his attraction to Zagreus, yes, but not how thought-out his desire was. He hadn't confessed to the way he'd locked himself inside his chambers and lay with his hand on his cock and his free arm thrown over his eyes so that even he couldn't witness his own behavior. He'd imagined Zagreus and Patroclus in equal measure, then.

"Achilles," Patroclus prompted him, giving one long stroke like he simply couldn't stop himself. Of course he couldn't—with the two of them in hand like this he was forestalling his own pleasure as much as Achilles'.

"Yes," he said, hiding his face in the crook of his elbow the same way he'd done on the occasion that just wouldn't stop floating through his mind. "I've thought of him in such a way."

"There's no shame in it, love." Patroclus took his hand, drawing his arm up and away so that he could see Achilles' face. "After all, I'm the one who fucked him."



"Which makes you the more honest of the two of us. I'm the one who turned him away."

"You don't have to be." Patroclus removed his hand, pulling Achilles close to him instead, so that they could rut together the way they'd touched one another when they first came together, barely beyond the cusp of adolescence. "There is a solution to this, after all."

Achilles, lost in the hazy feeling that overcame him, did not ask what it was.

Patroclus, ever helpful, provided an answer anyway. "Take him. I'll even proposition him on your behalf, if you're still so nervous about it."

"Hush. I'm not." Would that he'd just stop talking, so that Achilles could, even if just for a moment, think of something, anything other than Zagreus.

"Well, then. I can't wait to see this. He'll blush so prettily for you when you ask him, like a maiden on her wedding night."

Achilles, of course, knew that there was only one suitable way to make Patroclus stop. That would be a very lengthy and thorough kiss, the sort that would leave anybody speechless. Naturally.

— — —

In the heat of the moment, it had been much easier to imagine propositioning Zagreus, but actually *doing* so was a more complicated matter.

It was as if he was a boy again, trying to catch Patroclus' attention, but without all the boisterous confidence that came with being a demigod among regular folk, and with the weight of his lifetime's worth of regrets behind him. Granted, it wasn't the lengthiest lifetime of regrets, but it was enough to make him stop before taking his ward into his bed before. There simply was no elegant way of bringing it up, Achilles decided, and once he realized there was no elegant way of bringing it up, he was much more comfortable asking Zagreus to have a drink with him.

Anything he'd say would be the absolute nadir of his intelligence, but he wasn't so worried. Anything he said which was unwelcome could be passed off as a mistake born of drink, which eased his fears enough that he asked Zagreus to join him in the lounge almost as soon as he returned from Elysium. It was the perfect solution.

It was a terrible solution.

Zagreus' effervescence only grew brighter when his inhibitions lowered, and Achilles found the sound of his laugh and the sharp curve of his smile all the more enchanting when he himself was a bit drunk. The lounge filled and then emptied around them, until they were the only ones remaining, which must have meant everyone else in the House had decided it was late at night.

Zagreus leaned against Achilles with the kind of friendly camaraderie of the inebriated, although Zagreus' tolerance for alcohol, even the unnaturally strong godly sort, was good enough that Achilles knew he wasn't so far gone as to collapse if not for Achilles' shoulder propping him up. This was his first indicator that perhaps there was something to Patroclus' insistence that Zagreus felt something for him even now, even after Achilles had rejected him.

"It seems everybody's gone," Zagreus observed, his voice sounding unnaturally loud in the silence of the empty lounge, the only thing he had to talk over being the crackling of burning candles.

"Do you wish to go, too?" Achilles wasn't sure why he asked this. If Zagreus did, he'd miss his chance, and oh, he'd hear no end of it from Pat.

"We've still got to finish this, right?" Zagreus gestured to the bottle of nectar on the table between them, which neither of them had actually touched in a good while. The several other empty bottles scattered about were proof that they probably didn't need to.

"I suppose we do," Achilles said, anyway.

“I know it’s not the good stuff, but—” Zagreus gestured in the direction of the Broker’s desk across the lounge and the trove of wares behind, “—they’ve closed up shop, and so I’ve nobody to exchange my diamonds for ambrosia.”

“There’s no need.” Achilles was of the opinion that ambrosia was one of those substances that was too easy to overindulge in. Undead or otherwise, mortals simply weren’t meant to consume drink meant for the gods. Former demigod or no. “Although, Patroclus and I did enjoy your last gift. You spoil us.”

“That’s good.” Zagreus turned away from him just a little, his dark lashes obscuring his eyes, and Achilles was no longer certain whether his flush was simply from the drink.

In that moment, putting his arm around Zagreus felt like a monumental step. Achilles had to focus to keep himself from going tense all over, as if he was expecting a negative reaction, a rejection of his own.

There was no such consequence. Zagreus merely gave a soft, happy sigh, and melted into Achilles’ touch.

“Pat mentioned a thing or two about you and him, last I was in Elysium.”

Ugh. No elegant way to bring it up, but certainly Achilles could have done better than that.

“What sort of thing or two?” Zagreus didn’t seem perturbed by Achilles bringing it up, and Achilles well knew he was smart enough that it wasn’t simply that he hadn’t caught Achilles’ meaning. The question had the same kind of prodding as Patroclus’ *have you ever imagined it?*

Zagreus was a much more polite man than Pat, though, so when Achilles replied, “I think you know what sort of thing,” he didn’t press the matter further.

He did sit up, though, and the lack of contact was not encouraging. "Sir, I... I didn't mean to come between the two of you." He took Achilles' hands,

looking earnest as could be, although Achilles' addled mind couldn't help but imagine what Patroclus would say to that. *No, we would in fact like very much for you to come between us.*

"There's no need for concern," Achilles said, giving Zagreus' hand a squeeze. "I only meant... Pat brought it up because he thought you and I had done the same."

Zagreus' bi-colored eyes went wide, and the flush that was already high on his cheeks from drink deepened considerably. "I assure you, I didn't try to lead him to believe we—um. I mean, he'd have no reason to assume—why *did* he assume...?"

He was close enough that if Achilles lowered his head a handspan, their foreheads would be pressed together. "Because he knows my tastes."

"And I...?"

"Yes."

Zagreus frowned. "I didn't finish the question, Sir."

"You were going to ask if I find you attractive. How could I not? You've always been so lovely."

Zagreus took a sharp breath in, the compliment running through him in the form of a shiver. The risk, Achilles decided, was over. All of Zagreus was sweetly inclined toward him, hanging on every word. "Well. You know how I feel, I suppose."

"Not entirely," Achilles said, because the words had never been spoken aloud; Zagreus was functioning on the assumption that his gifts spoke for themselves. "Although, I believe that if I had accepted your advances, I might know how you feel with a bit more certainty. Yes?"

"I think so. Will you accept my advances now?" Zagreus asked.

He had accepted several advances already, else Zagreus would not be so close. "I will."

He could feel the curve of Zagreus' smile against his own mouth.

All of him was sweet: the way his hand curled at the nape of Achilles' neck, the little happy sigh he breathed between them, the eager pressure of his lips and tongue. Zagreus' every action was spurred on by something more than just the impatience of the drunk and the stubbornness of Zagreus in general, and Achilles responded in kind, trying to taste the particular flavor of urgency in his mouth. Zagreus' hands shook as he held onto Achilles, and oh.

*Oh.*

It was *longing*.

Achilles would have to be entirely unobservant to have not noticed that plenty of people looked at him with such desire while he yet lived, but he'd never delighted in somebody's attraction to him this much—not even Patroclus, who became his lover so young Achilles had scarcely realized he was being admired before their first kiss.

Zagreus scrambled into Achilles' lap and Achilles' arm went around his waist and his mouth opened under Zagreus' as Zagreus' hands stroked through his hair. There was, Achilles thought, some longing on his own part as well.

Here was the thing about squashing down his affections for a man for years on end: once cracked into, they all came spilling out at once. He felt rather like a dam that had been split open, and was thankful Zagreus was not the type to be swept away. He was a match for everything Achilles gave him, kissing and biting and touching him in turn, every reaction he drew from Achilles spurring him on.

And gods, the heat of him. Patroclus had not been exaggerating. He was like putting your feet up next to a nearly burnt-out fire and feeling the residual heat from the embers. The heat came from within; it didn't scald your skin but it was overwhelmingly *warm*.

Zagreus rocked in his lap, and even through the half-dozen layers of clothing they had between, Achilles could feel his arousal. He squeezed Zagreus' thighs, feeling over muscle he'd admired (and then told himself he was not admiring) and drinking in Zagreus' sigh. Achilles had half a mind to ask Zagreus if the two of them might retire to his quarters, but the other half of his mind, which was preoccupied with Zagreus' mouth, refused to pause to ask Zagreus anything.

Zagreus ground down into his lap again and Achilles moaned, loud enough that he nearly missed the clatter from behind them.

A plate fell off the kitchenette counter and shattered on the floor, and Achilles jerked away from Zagreus to find the Chef standing behind them, wearing what passed for a mortified look on their indistinct face.

"Oh, uh. Hello." Zagreus said, and then cleared his throat. "Didn't realize it was so late. Or, early? I'm not quite sure."

The Chef waved him off, but did so with a knife, which felt distinctly like a request that the two of them leave. With Zagreus still seated on his lap, Achilles was struggling to will his cock into a state of disinterest despite the unpleasantness of being interrupted. He'd rather not walk into the hall while still worked up, if he had the choice.

Zagreus sat back, still breathing hard, very little embarrassment and quite a lot of arousal in the flush on his face. He traced his thumb over Achilles' lower lip—it came away wet. "Going to take a portal straight to Elysium to get yourself sorted?" he asked. "I'm sure Patroclus would be interested in hearing about... uh, unless that isn't a thing the two of you are interested in together. I just sort of thought, since he'd talked to you about us. But if you don't want to."

"Gods, no, you've no idea how much I want the three of us to—"

A sharp, pointed whack of the knife through an onion from the direction of the kitchen.

Zagreus shook his head, grinning. "Yes. Please. Get to Elysium, I'll be there."

"Zagreus, this doesn't have to move so fast unless you want it," he said, straightening Zagreus' laurel on his head.

"I want as fast as possible. I'll race you there." Zagreus grinned, sharp. It was as clear a declaration of consent he'd get aside from Zagreus putting it in writing.

Achilles grinned, ducking his head. "You can't get there faster than me, lad."

"Oh, don't worry, I'll catch up. Tell Pat I'm coming for him. Coming for both of you." Zagreus stood, visibly adjusting himself as he did. "That's meant to be an innuendo, in case you were wondering."

"Funny, I had somehow guessed that."

— — —

Getting to Elysium was no challenge for Achilles—as a shade, he was able to vanish and re-materialize between points in the underworld with relative ease, and finding his way to Pat's side always came easiest. His connection to Patroclus ran nearly as deep as his connection to the House of Hades. When he visited Patroclus, though, he was never certain whether he would appear at the glade where he'd first discovered Patroclus waiting for him, or at the house, a little place among Elysium's many residences. Pat had apparently owned the place the entire time he'd been waiting for Achilles, but hadn't stepped across the threshold once.

Nowadays, the chances he would be at the house or at the glade were fairly even, which meant Achilles was praying for the former, for the privacy it would allow. Although the glade was fairly remote, their newfound friendship with some of Elysium's denizens meant that occasionally someone would come running in to interrupt whatever they were up to. Usually just a conversation, but once or twice, Pat had been holding him, kissing him deep and maybe on the edge of undressing him.

Come to think of it, it had been Zagreus who nearly stumbled upon them like that, hadn't it?

If such thing happened now, would they keep going, let him stumble upon them in the midst of lovemaking? And what if Achilles happened to be the one arriving second, would he catch Zagreus sitting in Patroclus' lap the way he'd been in Achilles' only moments ago?

The possibilities excited him, and the fact that he arrived at Patroclus' home (*their* home, Pat called it Achilles' home too) excited him even more.

If he ran to the door, well, there was nobody around to notice.

Pat was reading, lounging on the low couch in the main room of the house, a lazy sort of moment the likes of which he hadn't often been allotted in life. He looked good like that, Achilles thought, one knee propped up, his fingers curled around the edges of the volume, his brow furrowing just a bit as he considered what he read. He must have heard Achilles come in, but he didn't react, other than shifting his feet to give Achilles a place to sit beside him. If he hadn't, Achilles would have been equally happy to climb into his lap, although Patroclus would be irritated to have his reading interrupted.

"I talked to him," Achilles said, resting a hand on Patroclus' knee, tracing the outlines of his kneecap.

"Did you?"

"I did more than talk to him, actually."

That prompted Patroclus to set the book aside, not even bothering to mark his page before giving Achilles his full attention. "And? You're smiling, so it couldn't have been that much of a catastrophe."

Achilles' hand slipped beneath the curve of Pat's knee, hooking around the tendon there and drawing his legs apart so that Achilles might fit between them. "You were right." He settled himself against Patroclus' chest, enjoying the self-satisfaction that came over his face.



“What a beautiful thing to hear, time after time. Of course I was right.” He kissed Achilles once, but drew away before he managed to distract himself with it. “Did you take him? You were gone long enough that I thought you might have.”

What *else* had he been thinking of? Achilles shook his head. “It took me quite some time to ease myself into bringing it up. Time, and more than a few drinks.”

“I thought that just as likely.” Patroclus coiled a strand of Achilles’ hair around his fingertip. “Is that what’s got you so flushed, then?”

“Among other things.”

Patroclus didn’t ask him to go on, merely fixed Achilles with his most benign of smiles. He knew Achilles would tell him whether or not he asked, and he’d decided not to.

“You were right about other things, too. He’s the warmest thing.” Achilles trailed his fingertips down Patroclus’ side, which was mostly bare, as he was dressed in casual clothing instead of their usual armor. “He’s following after me. Meeting us here.” They probably had only moments until Zagreus arrived.

“So, then, we must decide what to do with him. Yes?”

“I... I must admit, I was planning to let him decide.” Achilles let his hand rest at Pat’s waist, fingers curling just a little to hold him. “Although, I suppose I don’t know the extent of his tastes as well as you do.”

Patroclus clicked his tongue, admonishing. “Don’t tease, not when it’s simply disguising your jealousy.”

“I’m not,” Achilles argued, inclining his head so that he might kiss the very edge of Patroclus’ jaw, just where his beard gave way to the smooth skin of his neck. “I’m simply alluding to the fact that I was not the one who seduced a god.”

He felt the rise and fall of Pat's chest as he sighed. "In life, I almost certainly would have said that the affairs of gods are best not meddled in. But I suppose he isn't just any god." No, he was not. "You avoid the topic at hand, though. What shall we do with him, once he arrives?"

"I might have a few ideas." The answer came not from Achilles, but from Zagreus, who had come in their front door without knocking. How much had he overheard?

Both of them sat up, and Zagreus circled around the couch, looking just as devilish as he had when Achilles had been parted from him. "The fates must have been kind," Patroclus said, by way of greeting.

"Oh, yes, I stumbled upon your place only moments after I reached Elysium—come to think of it, I probably still smell like sulfur from Asphodel. Sorry." Zagreus wasn't carrying a weapon, but the one he'd come in with was standing propped in the corner by the doorway. It was Achilles' own spear.

"Don't apologize, it is admirable of you to battle your way here." Achilles reached for him, stricken for just a moment when Zagreus shied away.

"I... have quite a lot of blood on my person, only some of it my own, so perhaps I should get cleaned up—"

Patroclus laughed, shook his head. "We've had one another while in worse states. Come here."

"Well, if you say so." Zagreus smirked again, and this time, did not hesitate before dropping into Achilles' lap, placing himself in the exact position they'd been when they were caught in the lounge. This time, the extra pair of eyes on them was welcome, rather than an interruption. Pat's knee was still tucked up against Achilles' side, and Zagreus had one hand on Pat's thigh. His eyes were only fixed on Achilles, though.

"You said you had ideas," Achilles prompted him.

“I do.” Zagreus shifted in his lap, a little of his confidence fading. He looked somewhere in the direction of Achilles’ breastplate when he next spoke. “I’ve wanted you to fuck me for ages, sir.”

Achilles held him by the waist, pulled Zagreus in to kiss him, long and deep, like he had before. Zagreus was just as willing to accept his affection, settling himself happily into Achilles’ arms.

“So,” Zagreus said, pulling away for just a moment, “is that a yes?”

“It is. But, Pat, do you...?”

Patroclus, in fact, looked very content where he was at, his gaze alert as he watched the picture the two of them made. “I think you should take him, while I watch. After all, it’s only fair, considering what I’ve done before.”

Zagreus’ lower lip caught between his teeth, his cheeks dimpling as he smiled. “Yes. Yes, let’s do that.”

‘Doing that’ was a little more complicated than need be, mostly because Achilles wanted to take Zagreus to their bed, which made Zagreus insist on getting cleaned up beforehand.

Patroclus, bless him for having his head on straight, mentioned offhand that they had a bath. At first, Achilles had found himself irritated—it was rare that his patience wore thin these days, but there was a little of his old self that crept in sometimes—until he realized that Pat’s offer landed them with Zagreus completely nude, soaking wet, and sighing in pleasure as he sank into the water. All right, perhaps he could wait a bit longer.

Pat was giving him a *look*. As if, perhaps, there was something Achilles should say.

Anything he might have was caught in his throat, and so Patroclus spoke for him. “Shall we join you?” he asked Zagreus, who had just finished scrubbing off most of the remains of his battles to reach them. The water had muddied around him for a moment, but it returned to perfect clarity. Elysium. Ever-tending to the needs of its heroes.

There was a spark of mischief in Zagreus' eyes, as he replied, "yes, I think you shall." He extended a hand, and Patroclus took only the brief moment required to remove his clothing before taking it.

Achilles, never hesitant in life, felt frozen in place as he watched his beloved be drawn in by such a lovely new flame.

It was clear that this was not their first kiss. There was no awkwardness, no moment of pause, they simply fit together, Zagreus' wet hands coming up to hold either side of Pat's face. Gods, what Achilles would give to have seen their first.

Although, he supposed, he and Pat were even in that regard.

Zagreus carefully removed Patroclus' laurel, setting it down by the side of the bath with the kind of care Achilles saw him apply to his most treasured things (Antos included, come to think of it). Zagreus did not remove his own laurel, and it continued to glow and sprout new leaves, which popped like sparks but landed on the surface of the water like the most delicate of petals.

As soon as Patroclus' mouth left his, Zagreus was looking at Achilles. It was a look Achilles had seen on his face before, when Zagreus knew he had done something exceptionally well and was begging approval. *Blood and darkness*. He was showing off.

Occasionally, Achilles scolded him for such behavior, told him not to let his ego get ahead of him, but more often, as now, Zagreus deserved his praise.

"Look how gorgeous the two of you are." His voice came out breathless even though he had no need for breath to begin with. It was the only way his body knew how to express how taken aback he was.

The contrast between them was lovely, Patroclus' dark skin against Zagreus' lighter complexion, Pat's soft curves pressed to their prince's sharp edges. It was clear, like this, that Patroclus was indeed broader than Zagreus, but not by much. The lad was nothing of the scrawny youth Achilles had taken under his wing to train all that time ago. Would that the water did not so

thoroughly diffuse their lower halves, that Achilles might compare everything below, as well.

Patroclus and he had shared enough lovers between them that Pat knew what he found attractive—the way Patroclus made Zagreus sigh and tip his head back as he mouthed over his throat, the sound of Patroclus' rumbled laughter, the span of Patroclus' wide hands compared to the taper of Zagreus' waist. He set one hand over Zagreus' ribs, a placement which might have seemed accidental were it not for the way his thumb brushed over Zagreus' nipple until it was stiff. This drew yet another soft sound of pleasure from Zagreus, and he batted Patroclus' hand away as he turned his attention to Achilles.

"Well, sir? You're going to have to take some of that off if you mean to join us."

Achilles had scarcely noticed the fact that he was still dressed.

"I would get out and help you," Patroclus said, "but then I would get you all wet, and we wouldn't want that. So, I suppose I must resign myself to staying where I am at."

Oh, he certainly looked resigned. He'd better be glad Achilles could strap his armor on in a matter of seconds and could remove it just as quickly.

"I'm sure it's such a trial," he joked, setting his clothing on the bench meant for such things instead of dropping it to the floor. "Having to receive such pleasant attentions from the loveliest of men whilst you wait on me."

Zagreus laughed, and splashed some water in Achilles' direction. The bath was quite large, as was the room in which it was situated, so it didn't reach him. "Come on, hurry up. I want to kiss you again."

"You're not enjoying the view?" Patroclus asked, although Zagreus clearly was. He hadn't taken his eye off Achilles for a second.

"I'm enjoying it quite a lot, actually."

Pat's hand had disappeared beneath the surface of the water. Judging by the soft moan Zagreus gave in response, there was little question as to what he was doing. Achilles nearly tripped himself trying to undress faster, and by the time he joined them in the water, they were kissing again. Up close, it was even better. He could see every little flutter of Zagreus' lashes, could hear every soft breath from his lips.

Patroclus must have been going by sound alone, because he didn't look as he pulled Achilles in by his hip. He gave Zagreus one more heated kiss, still stroking him below the water, and then leaned away.

They'd hardly done a thing to him, and yet, Zagreus looked wrecked. His face was flushed, the sweet pink fading all the way down his throat to color his chest, and it took him a long moment to focus on Achilles, one hand still gripping Patroclus' shoulder. He let go as he surged toward Achilles, clinging to him and pulling him into a kiss that almost had Achilles falling right off his feet. He caught Zagreus around the waist, his opposite hand pressing to the center of Zagreus' back.

There was nothing he could detect, but Achilles liked the idea that Zagreus still had Patroclus' taste on his tongue.

There was a shift in the water as Patroclus moved away from them, and Achilles' eyes opened to catch him sitting against the edge of the bath, his arms draped over the edge of the pool, fingertips barely skating the surface of the water as he observed.

"Oh, carry on. Watching the two of you is going to be fun."

"I aim to please." Zagreus said it with the tone of a joke, but Achilles knew him well enough to find the kernel of truth there.

"You're quite pleasing, lad," he said, and felt Zagreus shiver against him despite Achilles tacking on the pet name out of force of pure habit. Or perhaps *because* of that. Zagreus' cock was pressed against Achilles' hip, fully hard from Patroclus touching him, and he went up on his toes to rub against Achilles.

"Still going to insist on going to your bed?" Zagreus asked, "or will you take me right here?"

The contrasting colors of Zagreus' eyes gleamed that much brighter as he grinned up at Achilles, halfway daring him to make a move.

"I'll take you to our bed," Achilles said, "after." His hand slid to Zagreus' lower back, pressing him closer, and Zagreus made a strangled whine in the back of his throat.

"Yes," Zagreus said, wearing a smile very like the one he donned whenever he managed to beat Achilles in sparring practice. He turned his head, but his attention remained very much on Achilles, damp fingers stroking the back of Achilles' neck. "Patroclus, if you don't mind finding us some oil for...?"

"Oh, am I running and fetching things, now?" Patroclus smiled through his complaints.

"You don't have to run anywhere, it's right there," Achilles said, ducking his head to return his mouth to Zagreus' person, this time kissing the curve of his neck.

"Of—*ah*—of course you two just have it right by the bath. Convenient."

Convenient, indeed. Achilles had to admit, this particular bottle hadn't seen much use lately, but just after their reunion, they'd been quite engrossed in one another. *Every surface of this damn house*, Achilles had promised. He was glad, now, that they had left it there. Zagreus was feeling over Achilles' shoulders, his back, his hips, and no part of Achilles wanted to forego his touch for even a moment.

There was a set of steps leading into the bath, and if you sat on the first of these, the water hardly rose higher than your lap. It was here that they arranged themselves, Achilles with Zagreus astride his lap, Patroclus behind him, slyly insisting that Achilles would enjoy things more if he had his hands free to touch as he liked while Patroclus prepared their new lover.

And so, Zagreus had two of Patroclus' thick fingers filling him, little noises punched out of his chest whenever Pat did something he particularly liked. Achilles was occupied with Zagreus' collarbones, nipping and worrying at his skin until it turned red while Zagreus begged for more.

"Oh, come on. You know I don't require that much preparation, just let me *oh—mmm*, well if you're not going to stop, keep doing that."

In order to accomodate Patroclus' movements without making him complain of his wrist getting sore, Zagreus had to sit up on his knees, which put Achilles eye-level with his chest and Zagreus at the perfect height to grasp a fistful of Achilles' curls and maneuver him into tipping his head back, so that Zagreus might remind Achilles how *good he was with his tongue*.

He was distracted, it seemed, by whatever Patroclus was doing with his hand, gasping into Achilles' mouth as Patroclus continued to touch him. Achilles wrapped a hand around Zagreus' cock, hoping to push him into further incoherence, but Zagreus grasped his wrist.

"Not... not yet. I can't."

Patroclus laughed, leaning in to kiss Zagreus' shoulder. "Not that it would take you too long to get ready again." He said it like there were memories attached, stories Achilles would have to ask for at some point or another.

"I'm ready *now*, take your fingers out so that I can sit on his cock." The profanity wasn't too unusual for Zagreus, but the implication was, and it made Achilles clutch his thighs, resting his face against Zagreus' breastbone.

He took a breath and rearranged his thoughts. "Perhaps we ought to rearrange ourselves. This can't be easy on your knees, lad." And it would only get more painful on his knees if he had to spread his legs wider. Which he certainly would, if he wanted to *sit on Achilles' cock*.

"Bend me over the side, then?" Zagreus suggested. "Honestly, anything, just... *now*."



Zagreus had never been patient, Achilles supposed, and here was just another area in which he lacked that particular virtue. Achilles was similarly impatient, and all too willing to follow Zagreus' suggestion.

The side of the bath had a little lip, a mosaic border, which was where Zagreus placed his hands, letting Achilles press his chest to Zagreus' back. Patroclus was still over on the steps, lounging half-out of the water. At its deepest point, the water was only just over waist-deep, and there was a low ledge around the edges where one could sit and enjoy the comfortably warm temperature of the water. Zagreus had his knee up on said ledge, so that he might spread himself open for Achilles.

He was a *picture* like this, the curve of his spine, the water lapping at his hips, the brightness in his vibrantly green eye as he looked over his shoulder at Achilles. "Well? I know you're not waiting on *me*, sir."

Achilles laid one hand over Zagreus' on the edge of the bath, his opposite going to Zagreus' hip to steady him as Achilles pressed in. He felt Zagreus' back move as he took in a deep breath, his shoulders shift as his body adjusted to accompany Achilles. Dropping his head to Zagreus' shoulder, Achilles rolled his hips forward, until his cock was fully buried in Zagreus' welcoming heat.

*He's the warmest thing you've ever felt.*

Patroclus was being proven more and more correct every second, it seemed.

Achilles took his time, adjusting to Zagreus' heat, not for Zagreus' benefit but for his own, fearing that he wouldn't last. That was the downside to sexuality being so tied to the emotional instead of the physical down here, Achilles supposed, one's stamina was dependent upon one not becoming overwhelmed with passion.

"Apologies, lad. I need a moment," he said, his words more breath than voice.

Zagreus nodded, turning his head to catch Achilles' mouth in a kiss. "Take as long as you need."

Patroclus, who had been quiet up 'til now, laughed, muffled like he was trying to hide it behind a hand. "You seem to have that effect on people, Stranger," he said. "Not to worry, love, I needed a moment, too."

"I don't doubt that," Achilles said. He gave an experimental rock of his hips, and even that small motion had Zagreus arching his back and moaning, his voice echoing off the tiled walls of the bath.

How loud could Achilles make him?

He gave Zagreus' hand one final squeeze before pulling back, so that he might have a better grip on Zagreus' hips.

Zagreus yelped and had to brace himself harder, clearly not having anticipated just how hard Achilles wanted to fuck him. Or perhaps thinking that Achilles would be slow to get started after he'd finished having his moment. Achilles stroked the crease bisecting his hip and thigh, slowing for just a moment.

"Too much?" he asked, and Zagreus shook his head so quickly he would've bloodied Achilles' nose if Achilles wasn't swift enough to lean out of the way.

"It's good." His knuckles were white.

"He likes it hard," Patroclus helpfully interjected, although Achilles was familiar enough with Zagreus' other lovers that he was already aware of this.

The fact that they were sunk into the water up to their hips meant that Achilles couldn't quite go as hard as he would have liked, but he supposed he should go easy on Zagreus. The lad just fought his way through two and a half realms of the Underworld for this—he deserved all the kindness they could give him.

The water churned around them; Achilles swore that Zagreus' burning soles made the temperature rise. He kissed Zagreus' neck, nipped at him, knowing that the marks would be gone by the time he next saw Zagreus, but

that everyone he faced until this escape attempt ended would see them—Theseus, Thanatos, his father, even. That one probably should have disturbed Achilles more, but he was preoccupied with Zagreus leaning into his touch, begging for more, reaching up with one hand to keep Achilles close to him.

Zagreus was satisfyingly loud, found no shame in shouting out his pleasure, and it made Achilles drive into him faster, punctuating every, *"yes, oh gods, right there, Achilles"* with a deep thrust that had Zagreus begging him for more, *sir, just fuck me.*

Achilles only had the presence of mind to look up and over at Patroclus once, and the image of him, legs spread, relaxing against the edge of the bath with his hand on his cock. When Patroclus realized he had Achilles' attention, he smiled, squeezed his cock, let Achilles see the precome beading at the head. This was affecting Pat as much as Achilles, then.

"May I touch you, lad?" he asked Zagreus, fingers framing Zagreus' cock already despite the fact that he was yet to answer.

"Ha... if you want me to come, then. Yes. Yes, *oh.*"

That was precisely what he wanted.

The water purified all that entered it, so it went clear shortly after Zagreus came, grinding forward to fuck Achilles' fist until he finished.

He breathed hard, still grinding back on Achilles' cock despite having spent himself. He straightened up, sinking back into Achilles' arms, head lolling back onto Achilles shoulder, and asked, "did Patroclus happen to mention how good I am with my mouth?"

"Funny. He did, in fact."

Zagreus' smile and his kiss were both full of promise.

He guided Achilles to sit on the edge of the bath, and sat between his spread legs, laying his cheek against Achilles' thigh. "You've no idea how long

I've wanted to do this," he said, his voice pure adoration. "Patroclus perhaps has some idea, because I'm starting to believe I wasn't being very subtle when I began asking him about you."

Patroclus muttered something that sounded a lot like *you wouldn't know subtlety if it slapped you on the ass*.

"He's not wrong," said Zagreus, who could hear him just as well as Achilles could.

"Get over here," Achilles said, "you can't possibly see anything from that angle."

Patroclus did as he was beckoned, sitting close enough that his thigh was pressed to Achilles', his hand on Achilles' chin tipping his face into a kiss. Patroclus was the only person he had been with since his death, the one with whom Achilles had discovered the strange new oversensitivity that came with no longer being invulnerable. How curious, then, that it would feel strange to feel the scratch of Patroclus' beard against his chin after only a little time kissing Zagreus. Perhaps it was simply the novelty of this touch in combination with Zagreus' fingers skating up and down the length of his thigh, leaving wet trails behind that made him shiver as they cooled.

"If you want me to suck your cock, you might need to stop doing that." Zagreus' comment gave him pause, although Patroclus did not stop kissing him. "I'm only saying, I could watch this for hours. Quite distracting. Although, it is making me salivate." He stroked Achilles as he continued, hesitant, as though he needed a moment to map out the shape of his cock, despite having just had it inside him.

"I suppose I should allow our dear prince his focus," Patroclus agreed, leaning his chin on Achilles' shoulder to watch Zagreus. "Now, then. I'll not distract you a moment longer."

Achilles would have argued that somebody so intently watching one perform such an act was distracting enough—he himself would have balked at the idea. Zagreus, however, was undeterred, perhaps even encouraged, by an audience. The way he licked at Achilles' cock, slowly making his way

from base to tip, had an air of performance in it. His eyes flickered up to take in their reactions, and he must have been pleased with what he saw. He took Achilles' cock all the way to the throat with one practiced movement and a soft noise of pleasure that vibrated through every inch of Achilles' being.

He pulled off in a slow slide, not because he needed to take his time, but because his impatience was apparently dulled now that he'd come. He grasped the base of Achilles' cock, licking over the head, teasing him.

"I do wish you had a bit more leverage," Zagreus admitted, "I think I'd like the way you'd fuck my throat."

Achilles' only response was a wordless moan, so thankfully, Patroclus was a bit more eloquent.

"Let him hold onto you," Patroclus suggested, "move you where he will."

*Are you trying to kill me all over again,* Achilles wondered.

"You always have the best ideas," Zagreus said, happily allowing Achilles to pull him closer and stroke the hair at the nape of his neck, beneath where his laurel sat.

"I don't want to treat you too harshly," Achilles said, although with Zagreus already licking and sucking at the head of his cock again, it was difficult not to simply pull him down the length of it.

"So let go if I pull back," Zagreus said, with no concern that Achilles might not do so. He needn't have been concerned, of course, but Achilles was touched by his blind trust.

He started slow, gentle pressure at the base of Zagreus' neck, guiding him down until he once again swallowed the whole of Achilles' cock. The warmth of his throat was addicting; Achilles was certain this would be over soon, and yet no part of him wished to slow down. And Zagreus was all too willing to keep up with any pace Achilles set.

Now that Zagreus didn't need to focus so much (Achilles having done most of the pacing for him), he'd taken to multi-tasking, his hand stretching over Achilles' lap to reach for Patroclus' cock. This lit a deeper spark of interest within Achilles—he had always enjoyed watching his lover take his pleasure at another's hands, but the fact that Patroclus had been with Zagreus alone before was novel. He clearly knew what Pat liked, and Patroclus in turn knew Zagreus' wants. When he stroked Zagreus' arm and said "*good boy*," Zagreus whined, his throat vibrating around Achilles' cock. Achilles' grip on the back of Zagreus' neck tightened and he made a similar, if somehow needier, sound.

This was never going to last long, especially not when Patroclus elected to start kissing Achilles' neck, pushing his hair out of the way. If Achilles knew anything about how Patroclus thought, there was no coincidence in the way he placed marks on Achilles' neck and shoulder that matched the ones Achilles had given Zagreus.

That thought was what did him in. He held Zagreus in place at the base of his cock, pulled Patroclus in with his free hand. Zagreus' throat constricted around the tip of Achilles' cock as he swallowed, and then swallowed again, refusing to let up even when Patroclus reached over to remove Achilles' hand from the back of his neck. He stayed in place until Achilles had long since finished, and when he did finally pull off, he had to clear his throat before he could speak.

"Oh, yes, that was—" His voice had the edge of a rasp to it, which had Achilles wondering whether Theseus would notice. Then, his thoughts were otherwise occupied, because the next words out of Zagreus' mouth were, "thank you, sir."

"Oh, my dear," Achilles said, pulling Zagreus up to kiss him again, "I should be the one giving my thanks."

"I'd like to argue that it should be me," Patroclus said, leaning heavily against Achilles' side. "The two of you put on quite a show."

Zagreus craned his neck to kiss Patroclus, too. "It seems we aren't quite finished," he said, hands already on the task yet to be completed.

“In fact, I think we have multiple things left to attend to,” Patroclus corrected him, with a significant glance to the space between Zagreus and Achilles. Zagreus was already hard again; Achilles had felt it when he pulled him close.

“I believe that means now is the time I take you to our bed,” Achilles said.

Zagreus kissed him again, and agreed.

"Insatiable." Patroclus laughed, shaking his head. "This man of yours."

**Author's Note:**

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